



2007 All-America City Award Application

Community Information

Community name and state:

City of Clinton, NC

Your community is applying as a:

Neighborhood Town City County Region

If applying as a region, name participating communities:

If applying as a neighborhood, name city:

Has your community applied before? Yes No If Yes, which years: 2004, 2005

Has your community been a Finalist before? Yes No If Yes, which years: 2004, 2005

Has your community been an All-America City before? Yes No If Yes, which years: _____

Contact Information

All-America City Award contact (primary contact person available throughout entire competition and for follow-up):

Name: John Connet

Title: City Manager

Organization: City of Clinton, NC

Address: P. O. Box 199

City, State, ZIP: Clinton, NC 28329-0199

Phone (business/day): 910-592-1961

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Phone (home/evening): 910-590-2368

Fax (home/evening): _____

E-mail Address: jconnet@cityofclintonnc.us

List the 3 individuals who most actively participated in filling out this All-America City Award application (add additional lines if needed):

(Provide name and title; organization; phone; e-mail address)

John Connet	City Manager	City of Clinton, NC	910-592-1961	jconnet@cityofclintonnc.us
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Gloria Edwards	All America City Committee Chairperson		910-592-8105	vitishie@yahoo.com
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Betty Fortner	City Clerk	City of Clinton, NC	910-592-1961	ccclerk@cityofclintonnc.us
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The community applying will receive one complimentary membership (or a membership renewal if an AAC application was submitted last year) to the National Civic League for one year. To whom should this membership be directed?

Name: The Honorable Luther D. Starling, Jr., Mayor
Address: P. O. Box 199
Clinton, NC 28329-0199
Phone Number: 910-592-1961 Fax: 910-590-3127
Email: LEWDSTAR@Hotmail.com

If we are designated an All-America City, we agree to follow NCL's rules (available on the Web site) regarding use of the All-America City Award logo, a registered trademark of the National Civic League.

Signature: _____ Date: March 1, 2007

Name: Luther D. Starling, Jr. Title: Mayor

Community Statistics

Note: Use the most up-to-date statistics possible for your neighborhood, town, city, county, or region (*source suggestions*: U.S. Census Bureau, State Department of Economic Security, State Department of Finance, Department of Public Health, and local school statistics)

POPULATION (in year 2000 or most recent): 8726

Source/Date: N. C. Department of Commerce 2006 estimate

POPULATION PERCENTAGE CHANGE 1990-2000 (indicate + or -): + 2.6 %

Source/Date: U. S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

RACIAL/ETHNIC POPULATION BREAKDOWN (percentage):

White alone	<u>53.1%</u>	
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)		<u>4.7%</u>
Black or African American alone	<u>41.4%</u>	
Asian alone	<u>0.7%</u>	
American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) alone	<u>1.0%</u>	
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (NHOP) alone	<u>0.0%</u>	
Some other race alone	<u>2.8%</u>	
Two or more races	<u>1.0%</u>	

Source/Date: U. S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME: \$ 36,144

Source/Date: U. S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

PERCENTAGE OF FAMILIES BELOW POVERTY LEVEL: 18.1%

Source/Date: U. S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE: 4.3%

Source/Date: North Carolina Employment Security Commission, December, 2006

POPULATION BREAKDOWN BY AGE GROUP (*percentages, if available*):

19 years old and under 23.7%

20-24 5.5%

25-44 26.8%

45-64 22.1%

65 and over 21.9%

Source/Date: U. S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

PERCENTAGE OF HOME OWNERSHIP: 55.1 %

Source/Date: U. S. Census Bureau, Census 2000

WORKFORCE DISTRIBUTION -- Name the three largest employment sectors in your community and provide the percentage of total employed in each:

Manufacturing 19.4%

Local Government 15.6%

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting 14.2%

Source/Date: North Carolina Employment Security Commission

★★ **Please attach a state map with your community clearly marked (attach as a separate sheet).**

Part I

Civic Infrastructure

Describe your community. Using the four major sections of the National Civic League's *The Civic Index, Second Edition* (see www.ncl.org for more information), examine your community's civic infrastructure and civic capacity and describe how your community *lives* each of the answers to each of the following questions. Please include real examples of how your community has demonstrated its strengths and faced its challenges. The roman numerals correspond to parts of *The Civic Index, Second Edition*. Also see the application instructions for this section.

Add lines as needed for your responses

I. What is our community vision for its future? (300 word maximum)

As the largest incorporated community in the nation's leading agri-business county, Clinton would like to be

“a city of beauty and opportunity whose leadership is dedicated to providing its diverse citizenry a quality of life unsurpassed in the region.”

This vision statement was developed following **annual district meetings** to discuss short and long range visions for Clinton. These meetings give the City Council and staff the opportunity to put aside the day-to-day responsibilities of city operations and meet with the citizens to develop a **strategic plan**. The plan can be subdivided into visions for infrastructure and economic development to improve beauty and opportunity and visions for healthcare, education and recreation to improve quality of life.

- The vision for infrastructure and economic development includes a revitalized downtown which will spur new private investment, a modern detention facility to alleviate overcrowding and safety concerns, an expanded airport to serve increasing numbers of corporate aircraft, and upgrades to water and sewer to accommodate industrial expansion and protect the environment.
- The vision for healthcare establishes Clinton as a regional medical hub. The medical community is striving to accomplish this vision through continual recruitment of medical specialists and the expansion of medical facilities, including a Wellness Center, a radiation/oncology center, and a future diagnostic facility as well as growth of private clinics.
- The vision for education will provide citizens access to high quality programs such as technology training and an Early College High School as well as post-secondary education. Modern facilities are envisioned to manage student growth and maintain small class size.
- The vision for recreation in Clinton includes expansion of existing services in an inner-city neighborhood, creating a soccer complex to accommodate a regional soccer league and additional programming for senior citizens such as bridge tournaments, basketball leagues and travel.

II. How are we fulfilling the new roles for community governance?

II. (a). What is the extent and nature of community member participation in community improvement efforts? (300 word maximum)

Clinton confronts issues multilaterally and considers all viewpoints in decision making. All ages, races and genders contribute to community improvement efforts.

- **100+ active citizens volunteer to coach** youth sports. Forty-two volunteers helped coordinate the first “Willie Parker Football Camp” and sixty-five volunteers helped the Eastern North Carolina Dixie Youth Baseball Tournament succeed.
- Forward-looking **citizens formed Clinton Area Foundation for Education** to fundraise for supplementary school projects and supplies. In 2006 almost \$15,000 was granted to deserving teachers for their classrooms.
- **Concerned citizens saw a need in City Council’s District 5, a low income, inner-city neighborhood, and formed a neighborhood association** to address issues such as crime, drug use and dilapidated housing.
- **UCare, a grassroots domestic violence shelter**, has a citizen-based board and served 2491 clients in 2006.
- **Sampson Crisis Center**, created by the local pastoral association, fills a void where national aid organizations are unavailable. Volunteers and donations from citizens are the resources for this organization.
- **Citizens on the Sampson Arts Council promote arts** in Clinton and are spearheading an effort to revitalize the Small House, a historic residence.
- **Community members volunteer 150,000+ hours each year in our city schools.**
- Community Home Health and Hospice has **30+ volunteers that help provide in-home assistance**, as well as flowers, stuffed animals and lap quilts to patients.
- Over **40 adult volunteers assist medical staff** at Sampson Regional Medical Center. Each summer 25 youth, aged 12-17, interested in healthcare as a profession are selected into a special volunteer program at SRMC.
- Each year **thousands of citizens participate in Relay for Life**. In 2006, \$406,997 which ranked second highest per capita, nationally.
- **Sampson Alumni Association, comprised of alumni from a pre-desegregation African-American high school**, perform local service projects and fundraise for minority scholarships.

II. (b). What role does government play in community-wide decision-making and how do they contribute to improving the community? (300 word maximum)

Clinton operates under the “council-manager” form of government. An appointed city manager serves a non-partisan, district-elected city council. **Clinton City Council activity seeks input regarding local issues from our citizens and businesses through numerous volunteer advisory boards and commissions.**

The following advisory boards and commissions are activity engaged in the decision-making process in Clinton.

- **Planning and Zoning Board** reviews development proposals to ensure site compatibility and compliance with land use regulations.
- **Environmental Affairs Advisory Board** advises the city council on environmental issues such as recycling and solid waste collection. They also serve as our Tree Board for the Tree City USA program.
- **Airport Advisory Board** provides recommendations to the Clinton City County and Sampson County Board of Commissioners regarding operation of the Clinton-Sampson Municipal Airport, a collaborative venture of City of Clinton and Sampson County.
- **Recreation Advisory Board** develops programs to improve our community recreation programs. These programs are design to improve the health and quality of life for all youth, adults and senior citizens.

- **Clinton Downtown Development Corporation** consists of downtown merchants who provide direction to City Council on issues such as downtown beautification, business recruitment and land acquisition for public parking.

In addition to the engagement of private citizens via the advisory boards and commissions, the **mayor and City Council members serve on numerous community action panels or boards of directors** for private businesses and non-profit organizations. Through positions on these boards, they have the ability to form community-driven partnerships to improve the community.

The following are just a representative sample:

- Sampson Community College Foundation
- Sampson Regional Medical Center Board of Trustees
- NAACP – Local Chapter Board
- Premium Standard Farms’ Community Action Panel
- First Citizens Bank Board of Directors
- Clinton 100 Economic Development Committee
- Various Church Leadership Boards

II. (c). What role does the non-profit sector play in community-wide decision-making and how do they contribute to improving the community? (300 word maximum)

Non-profit organizations are important adjuncts to improving Clinton. In spite of a responsive government and vibrant business sector, people still have unmet needs. For each of these needs, a non-profit organization is there to help. *Led by concerned citizens passionate about improving the quality of life for the people of Clinton*, the following are some of the more prominent organizations in Clinton:

- **UCare, a non-profit domestic violence shelter**, advocates for victims and their children and provides abuser treatment programs and youth intervention at local schools. UCare collaborated with local law enforcement to establish a domestic violence unit. In 2006 UCare served 2,491 clients.
- **Sampson Crisis Center** provides emergency bill payment, food, and clothing assistance to families in crisis. The Center was started by the local ministerial association. In 2006 the center served over 12,315 clients.
- **Clinton Area Foundation for Education (CAFE)**, a community-driven volunteer organization, raises private dollars to provide grants to local teachers for innovative educational programming. \$12,000-\$15,000 is given annually to local teachers.
- **The local NAACP chapter** is actively engaged in public decision-making and advocates for improving minority participation in the community.
- **United Way** raised over \$200,000 in 2006, helping to fund Annual Breast Cancer Awareness Rally, Christmas Cheer Gift-giving Program, Wheelchair Assistance Program, and Delta Sigma Theta Mentoring Program.
- **Clinton Sampson Chamber of Commerce** advocates for local businesses in state legislature and supports city and county economic development, as well as, road projects to improve access to businesses. The Chamber sponsors “Leadership Clinton”, a program developed to train business leaders to become community leaders. In 2005, a “Junior Leadership Clinton” started to develop student leaders.

This *incredible support* is indicative of the *commitment* that this caring community has for its non-profit organizations and to improving the quality of life for our citizens.

II. (d). What role does business play in community-wide decision-making and how do they contribute to improving the community? (300 word maximum)

Clinton's local businesses and industries are an important mechanism for change and community improvement. These local businesses and industries range from international corporations such as Schindler Escalator Corporation; to national agri-business leaders such as Prestage Farms and Premium Standard Farms; to local businesses such as Star Telephone.

Here are just a few examples of how our business and industry contribute to the community:

- Dick Osborne, former General Manager of **Schindler Escalator Corporation** saw a need to attract upscale restaurants to our community. He along with several other business leaders led a 2000 initiative to hold a liquor-by-the-drink referendum. The measure passed and several new restaurants have been established in Clinton.
- **Premium Standard Farms Corporation**, Clinton's largest employer and utility customer has established a **Community Advisory Panel (CAP)** to gather citizen input regarding how plant operations are affecting the surrounding community. The CAP group has been successful in convincing the company to place air scrubbers on their rendering facility to reduce odors within the adjoining neighborhoods.
- **Prestage Farms and Schindler Escalator Corporation** faced with a shortage of trained workers **partnered with Sampson Community College** to plan and finance the Occupational Training Center. The center opened in 2005 and provides training programs to equip students to enter the workforce.
- Chuck Spell, current General Manager of Schindler Escalator Corporation and chairman of the county's **economic development commission guided an industrial recruitment trip** to the United Kingdom to recruit an industry that will support local agri-businesses by utilizing livestock waste as fuel for producing electricity.
- **Star Communications** responding to the need within our business community for wireless internet service, **partnered with the City of Clinton** to place wireless antennas on the city's water tanks. In return, Star agreed to design and host the City's website at no cost.

III. How do we work together as a community?

III. (a). How does our community recognize and celebrate its diversity? (300 word maximum)

Clinton sees **diversity as a strength, not a challenge**. Citizens are encouraged to participate in cultural opportunities, including theater, arts, and community festivals.

- Like much of America, we have experienced **a rising Latino population**.
 - Our local Catholic church sponsors activities to help our community understand the Latino community, including a Passion Play at Easter- once a *purely Hispanic tradition, now a local tradition*.
 - In December, over 1,000 people attended a celebration featuring traditional Latino music, dance and food.
 - Ten community leaders, along with peers from neighboring counties, visited Mexico as part of a Center for International Understanding program to better understand our newest residents.
 - This led to development of resource centers, which feature community agencies like social services, health department, hospital, community college, and school systems providing information to Latino families.

- The **Multicultural Business Committee (MBC)** of the Clinton-Sampson Chamber of Commerce is comprised of local minority business owners.
 - MBC *strives to encourage* success for local minority businesses.
 - MBC Awards Minority Business of the Year to a deserving business.
 - MBC Sponsors annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Business Reception to *recognize and promote local minority businesses*. In 2007, 400 attended, a 60% increase over 2006.
- Several hundred members of **the Coharie Indian Tribe**, a Native American group found in this region for centuries, reside in our area.
 - *Annual Pow-Wow*, open to the public, celebrates Native American heritage and promotes a better understanding of Native American culture.
- Local ministers formed a **pastoral association** enabling them *to build working relationships* and promote understanding among our diverse congregations and beliefs. Examples of such work include:
 - Lenten Lunch Series
 - Interdenominational Easter service
 - Interdenominational Thanksgiving service

III. (b). How does our community work with neighboring communities to address shared challenges? Is there a shared regional vision? (300 word maximum)

Collaborating with neighboring communities makes Clinton better! **“Progress through intergovernmental cooperation”** is the vision of the Mid-Carolina Council of Governments, to which Clinton belongs. In partnership with neighboring counties, resources and knowledge are pooled to identify solutions that address shared challenges.

Solid infrastructure in our region benefits everyone.

- Participation in the *Mid-Carolina Rural Transportation Planning Organization* provides quality roads.
- Participation in *Central Southern Coastal Plain Water Source Plan* addresses water source development.
- Within Sampson County, a *joint planning board* oversees land-use planning and code enforcement.
- The *Clinton-Sampson Chamber of Commerce* sponsors round-table discussions with local governments to identify **shared challenges and solutions using countywide legislation**.
- *Quality legislation* is ensured by maintaining contact with elected representatives.

The strength of our economy is important.

- Equal city/county funding, along with state and federal funds, maintains the *Clinton-Sampson Airport* that facilitates economic and community development.
- *Economic Development Commission* was formed and is funded by Clinton and neighboring Sampson County municipalities to attract industry to our county.

Maintaining quality education is a challenge we share with our neighbors.

- Clinton City Schools is *collaborating* with Sampson Community College and Sampson County Schools *to construct new school buildings*.
- This partnership, along with a Bill Gates Foundation grant, has established an *Early College High School* that opened in the fall of 2006.

Collaborations with neighbors help us confront challenges to our health and wellness.

- Our *hospital works with out-of-town medical providers* to bring cardiac and cancer care to Clinton.
 - Sampson County municipalities supported a plan to *pool Homeland Security funds* and purchase items, including a mobile decontamination unit that will benefit the entire county.
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IV. How does our community strengthen its ability to solve problems? (300 word maximum)

In Clinton problems are solved proactively. Located in an area with no assistance organizations, Clinton initiates preventative programs.

- **Government official training** includes City Council and staff attending state and national workshops and conferences to gain awareness of alternative solutions to community issues.
 - **Business training** includes Sampson Community College Small Business Center and the Chamber of Commerce partnering to sponsor round table discussions on topics such as the Identify Theft Protection Act and grant-writing seminars. High school students participate in a Job Shadowing program. Leadership training programs sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce prepare participants to be community leaders by exposing them to business, education and healthcare resources within our community.
 - **Sharing of information** is accomplished through annual City Council district meetings, televised Council meetings, an interactive website, and a monthly newsletter.
 - **Community empowerment** is seen in the City Council District 5 Initiative, focused on a low-income, inner-city neighborhood with a high crime rate. This initiative stems from concerns expressed by residents that city government had not adequately responded to the decline of their neighborhoods. The initiative includes residents collaborating with city officials to address quality of life issues such as crime, beautification and affordable housing.
 - **Alternative approaches to traditional judicial and law enforcement programs** include **Teen Court Events** where trials are carried out by peers who decide on sanctions, such as community service, for first time misdemeanor offenders. Repeat offenders rates in our area are 5%, while the state average is 50%. Clinton Police Department also hosts free summer movies preceded by safety or prevention presentations for over 100 children each week. In conjunction with downtown merchants, Clinton Police Department hosts Halloween on the Square with games, food and trick-or-treating which has been successful at curbing Halloween crime.
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Part II:
Community Background and Community Challenge Section

Add lines as needed for your responses

1 (A). Community Background: Set the background for your community. Tell its story. Summarize your community’s history, successes and struggles. Describe how your community got to where it is today and your community’s current state of affairs. (700 word maximum):

Clinton was established when Sampson County was formed in 1784. The **City of Clinton is the county seat**, at 963 square miles, the *largest county in North Carolina*. Located in the southeast corner of the state, our community is surrounded by rich farmland and green woodlands. Our current population is 8,726; however, we serve as a *regional business destination for over 50,000 people living within 15 miles of town*. Clinton has traditionally been comprised of Caucasians, African-Americans and Native Americans. Recently, a large influx of Hispanics have made Clinton their home. Our diverse citizenry

can be directly attributed to our agri-business culture. In 2000, the median household income in Clinton was \$26,941, which is dramatically lower than statewide and national averages of \$39,184 and \$41,994, respectively.

Clinton's economy traditionally has been centered around agriculture. Local farmers have grown principal crops such as cotton, sweet potatoes, vegetables and tobacco. Therefore, the Civil War took its toll on our community. Though most Sampson County families did not own slaves, 1,900 men fought for the South and many were lost. Nonetheless, nothing compared to the long years of socio-economic devastation that our region suffered during Reconstruction. We labored on as an agrarian community until the 1980s, when *many small farmsteads transitioned into corporate agri-businesses*. Recently, we have emerged as a national leader in pork and poultry production. In 2005, Farm Futures named Sampson County *the number one county in the nation for agri-business production*.

As in other Southern communities, Clinton had a labor-intensive industrial sector, including textile manufacturing and lumber processing, beginning in the 1950s through the late 1990s. Eventually, this manufacturing base declined due to cheaper overseas labor. In an effort to overcome the loss of manufacturing jobs, we have **worked to diversify our economy through the development of a local industrial park**, which has attracted local, national and international corporations such as Schindler Escalator Corporation, the only escalator manufacturer in the US.

Due to the low wage agriculture and manufacturing base, 18.1% of families live below the poverty level. This is compounded by a high illiteracy rate. To combat these issues, Clinton has turned its focus to **improving our educational system**. In 1947 residents of Clinton initiated a supplemental school tax to support our local school system. Although Clinton has one of the smallest school systems in the state, the extra funds allow for **challenging curricula** that enable youth to achieve at their highest levels of academic performance. This is evidenced in the fact that seven Clinton High School students have received the prestigious Morehead Scholarship from the University of NC at Chapel Hill.

Clinton's commitment to education carries over to the support of the local Sampson Community College (SCC). In July 2005, an **occupational training center** was completed. This training center was a *collaboration between the college and local industry*. Together, business and governmental leaders raised \$6,500,000 for construction and the purchase of training equipment. This facility will provide training programs to equip students with necessary skills to enter the local workforce. Building on this collaboration with local industry, SCC partnered with Clinton City and Sampson County Schools to establish **Sampson Early College High School**. The High School was awarded a grant from the Gates Foundation and recognized by NC Governor Mike Easley as one of the first Early Colleges in NC.

Clinton confronts problems before they arise. The community has reinvested in our downtown and inner city neighborhoods. Clinton is working with NC Department of Transportation to expand Highway 24 to allow greater access to the community. Construction of a new Clinton High School will provide relief to a growing student population. Local citizens are working hard to recruit international businesses, including a British green energy company and a Venezuelan aluminum processor.

History has shown the citizens of Clinton to be resilient and determined. Clinton is still a small town, but what has distinguished our community from others is the **shared vision of the citizens to work together with businesses, government, and non-profit organizations to address challenges**. Clinton's location away from large metropolitan areas has been a hidden source of strength, allowing our citizens to **develop solutions through innovative collaborations and community pride**.

1 (B). Community Celebration: Why should your community be selected as an All-America City? Describe what makes your community a great place to live, work, and play. (300 word maximum)

Clinton is an All America City. Known for a small-town atmosphere and rich quality of life, Clinton is a clean community with tree-lined streets and charming antebellum homes. Clinton's historic downtown area is attractive and busy, offering a safe harbor for small businesses. From a strong work ethic to enthusiastic play, community celebration begins and ends with Clinton's citizens. This is a community that has seen many changes in the faces of its residents. Among the citizenry are seven nationalities, all of which find Clinton warm and inviting.

Clinton is proud to be the center of the largest agri-business producing county nationwide. Our business sector continues to be competitive in the global market. However, even facing global pressures, our business community sees the importance of reinvesting in the local community.

People in Clinton are generous with their neighborly concern. Last year, citizens raised over \$200,000 for the United Way and \$406,997 for Relay for Life, ranking second highest in fundraising per capita nationally. Citizens also donate through schools, scouts, civic organizations, and churches.

Volunteers regularly help at schools, hospitals, and nursing homes. A Crisis Center was established to provide emergency financial assistance, clothing and shelter for disaster victims, and food for the needy. UCare is an organization that provides assistance and safe haven to local domestic violence victims. Both the Crisis Center and UCare, as with many of the local volunteer organizations, were initiated within the community and are unaffiliated with larger national organizations.

Clinton's recreation department offers various programs from senior citizens' basketball to tee ball for children. Citizens are strong supporters of Clinton High School's extracurricular activities, including athletic teams and the marching band. City-sponsored activities include Fourth of July fireworks, a Christmas parade, and a Downtown Court Square festival.

1 (C). Community Challenges: Based upon your community's current status, describe your community's two most pressing challenges.

Challenge #1: (200 words maximum)

In March 2005, the Sampson County Board of Commissioners approved a Capital Improvement Plan for construction of three high schools, an elementary school and early childhood education building at Sampson Community College. The estimated construction cost for these projects was approximately \$110,000,000, with **\$30,000,000 allocated for a new Clinton High School.** The approved plan specified that in order to pay for these and additional projects, the County would have to raise the property tax rate by \$.21 per \$100.00 property evaluation, a 30% increase. The County Commissioners made it clear that no additional county tax dollars would be available to cover project costs above the amount allocated to each project. Following Hurricane Katrina, fuel and raw material **costs skyrocketed and the estimated cost of the new Clinton High School rose to \$31.4 million.** Knowing that no additional tax dollars were available, the Clinton City School System had two options. They could reduce the size of the new high school or raise the additional \$1.4 million through a community-wide fundraising effort. The School System chose to move forward with the complete project and to **appeal to the community for the additional funding through the "March to a Million" campaign.**

Challenge #2: (200 words maximum)

The number of **Americans who are overweight or obese is increasing to epidemic proportions**. The American Heart Association says obesity at all age levels, regardless of race or sex, has increased 33% compared to ten years ago. These **trends hold true in North Carolina**, where 63% of adults and 16.7% of children between 2 and 18 years of age are overweight or obese. **Sampson County trends are worse** than state levels, with 66% percent of adults overweight and obese and 19.8 % of children between 2 and 18 years of age overweight. Prevention of diabetes, hypertension, and certain cancers is directly related to the community's fight against obesity. County-wide, the incidences of both diseases are 10% higher compared to state averages and 20% higher in deaths related to these diseases. These troubling statistics, coupled with information from the USDA showing that only 25% of Americans are getting the recommended amount of daily exercise, form the basis of this challenge. In an attempt to reverse these trends, in 2004, the community began responding with innovative solutions and community-wide collaborations that are making a positive difference in the lives of people in Clinton.

Part III: Community-Driven Projects

Add lines as needed for your responses

Part II requires descriptions of three collaborative community projects that have significantly affected the community.

The first two projects should be drawn directly from the two community challenges stated above.

The third project should be reflective of what your community is doing for children and youth.

PROJECT ONE (Challenge #1)

1. Project summary, name and give a brief description. (150 word maximum)

The goal of *March to a Million* was to rally the entire community to raise \$1,400,000 in four months, ensuring that the new public high school contained all the elements the students and community needed and deserved. The goal was to:

- Ensure adequate up-to-date **teaching space** for an expanding student population.
- Ensure inclusion of a **650-seat auditorium** for cultural art opportunities for students and entire community.
- Ensure inclusion of an **auxiliary gym** to relieve space constraints.
- Instill a feeling of **ownership** for the new Clinton High School (CHS).

March to a Million skyrocketed past its goal of \$1,400,000 because of a dedicated, totally-involved community, led by a 36-member committee which used all resources, including businesses, school employees and students, civic organizations, churches, individuals, alumni, booster clubs and government agencies to accomplish its goal.

2. Describe the relationship between this project and your second challenge, the project's history, and how it is being sustained? (300 word maximum)

In late 2005, it became evident, in the wake of rising fuel and building costs, that \$30,000,000 available from county funds was insufficient to build the new CHS.

- Since 2000, student enrollment had grown almost 25%. The new CHS was planned to provide **additional classroom space**, allowing re-grading of all existing campuses, thus creating needed space at each school in Clinton.
- A **modern facility** to enhance academic experiences was needed to maintain standards created by vigorous accountability programs such as "No Child Left Behind".
- The current CHS, built in 1975, has no auditorium. Consequently, students must use an outdated auditorium at the middle school. A **new auditorium** would provide a venue for cultural arts and large public meetings or performances currently held in the library, cafeteria or gymnasium.
- Recently, athletic offerings at CHS have grown. An **auxiliary gymnasium** would relieve congestion from multiple teams competing for practice space.

March to a Million was an inspired effort to raise \$1,400,000 by construction bid day, ensuring specific elements were included in a new facility. In December 2005, a committee of 36 highly-dedicated citizens, representing all community groups, met for the first time and volunteered to work tirelessly, meeting each Friday for sixteen weeks, to prepare and implement an innovative plan.

Fourth grader Wade Sumner was quoted in the *Sampson Independent* as saying of the goal, **"That ain't pocket change!"**

Several exciting events occurred during **March to a Million** that heightened enthusiasm.

- CHS football team won fifth State Championship in fifteen years.
- **Seventh Morehead Scholar (UNC's most prestigious scholarship) was named from Clinton.**
- CHS alumnus Willie Parker had record breaking touchdown run, helping Pittsburgh Steelers win SuperBowl XL.

As of bid day, **March to a Million** had raised an incredible \$2,000,087 in donations and pledges.

3. Describe the partnerships and collaborations involved in the creation, development, and implementation of this project. (300 word maximum)

Partnerships and collaborations developed by **March to a Million** tapped into significant community pride and propelled the project to unexpected heights. In December 2005, an energetic committee, chaired by a local attorney and recognized CHS supporter, was formed which included:

- At-home moms
- Board of Education (BOE) members
- Businessmen/women
- Doctors
- Attorneys
- Principal, teachers and school staff
- Booster club representatives

During meetings, sub-committees aided by additional volunteers addressed each component of attaining the goal. Naming rights for classrooms, gymnasiums, auditorium chairs and the auditorium created great interest. All sections of the community were asked to cooperate.

- **In-kind contributors** were solicited, including land moving services from Wells Brothers Construction, among others.
- A campaign contacted over 4,000 Clinton High School **Alumni**.
- **Professionals** pledged almost \$500,000 for construction.
- Massive **e-mail campaign** was started, blanketing Clinton citizenry and radiating to many out-of-towners.
- **Corporations** were solicited, resulting in many donations, including three \$250,000 donations.
- **Churches** were asked to participate. Holly Grove Church donated and dubbed the campaign "Salvation for Education."
- 30 **civic organizations** were contacted and many heard presentations.
- **Athletic and Band Boosters** agreed to build the new concession stand and soccer field.
- **School employees and students** were encouraged to take ownership in the new building. Students raised almost \$13,000 selling paper valentines.
- **Local government** spot-annexed the new CHS property and local, state and federal representatives made donations.
- House-to-house solicitations were made by committee members, inviting **citizens** to contribute.

Frequent articles in the *Sampson Independent* and *Fayetteville Observer* and interviews on WCLN radio informed the community of the project's progress.

The committee developed a deep feeling of camaraderie that carries over to other aspects of life in Clinton.

4. Describe the qualitative and quantitative outcomes of this project in the last 3 years and explain how this project has been a success. (300 word maximum)

Clinton City Schools is an independent school system garnering great community pride. *March to a Million*, a truly community-driven victory, demonstrated cooperation aimed at a united commitment to students and their future.

- To date, **\$2,349,463 has been raised**, surpassing the \$1,400,000 goal by leaps and bounds. This success **guaranteed an auxiliary gymnasium, four additional classrooms and a 650-seat auditorium** to host cultural art opportunities for students and citizens.
- The achievement of the goal to instill a **sense of ownership** for the new CHS, is evident by the degree of participation, with over **10% of the population making donations**.

ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF *MARCH TO A MILLION*:

- *March to a Million* ties to **largest USDA loan ever granted a public school in the USA**.
- Money donated constitutes **largest private funding for a public school project in NC history**.
- Architect Robbie Ferris stated that the new CHS is the **most efficient school they ever designed**.
- Success of *March to a Million* led to its **nomination for the Magna Award, a National award** from American School Board Journal and the **Trailblazer Award** from NC School Administrators.
- BOE presented project at **NC School Board Association** meeting and contributions were received from some attendees.

On August 17, 2006, children, parents, community members, school representatives and local, state and federal government officials, met and **took ownership of the new CHS site at the groundbreaking ceremony.**

- State Senator Charlie Albertson said, “**This is the result of goodness, which comes from people’s hearts.**”
- U.S. Representative Bob Etheridge said, “**This is a true community school. This represents what working together can do.**”

MARCH TO A MILLION RE-INVIGORATED A SCHOOL SYSTEM AND A COMMUNITY THROUGH PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION. THE CITY OF CLINTON IS A MICROCOSM OF WHAT MAKES AMERICA GREAT.

Name the primary contact for the project. Provide name & title, organization, address, telephone, and e-mail address. (This person may be contacted to verify information.)

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PROJECT TWO (Challenge #2)

1. Project summary, name and give a brief description. (150 word maximum)

An innovative, school-based program called ***Fitness Renaissance*** was combined with a state-of-the-art community-based ***Center for Health and Wellness*** to lead the fight against obesity and lack of physical exercise.

- ***Fitness Renaissance*** – is an exercise and awards program designed for children in grades K-5.
 - Physical Education teachers assess and assign individual student’s fitness goals in **five different exercises.**
 - V-sit reach
 - Quarter-mile run
 - Flex-arm hang
 - Push-ups
 - Shuttle run
 - Based on overall performance to goals, children are presented **gold, silver or bronze awards** at school-wide assembly.
 - ***Center for Health and Wellness*** – is a 28,000 sq. ft. exercise and aquatic center
 - Membership represents broad spectrum of individuals and businesses.
 - It offers free-form exercise and structured programs seven days a week.
 - **Fitness classes** – Yoga, fat-burn, Pilates, strength training
 - **Exercise sessions** – Spinning, walking, basketball, racquetball
 - **Aquatic sessions** – Warm-water, power plunge, swim teams
-

2. Describe the relationship between this project and your first challenge, the project's history, and how it is being sustained? (300 word maximum)

Fitness Renaissance was introduced in 2004 and quickly adopted by the Clinton Board of Education. It was modeled after a successful reading program and the high school Presidential Physical Fitness Awards Program. This program began prior to the NC Department of Public Instruction's mandate for increased physical activity time in all schools. **Enthusiasm was high** among the students, with 82% of students achieving their personal goals in the first 9-week period. Volunteer and financial support spread quickly throughout the community. With initial support from twelve diverse groups, **this program blossomed.**

- Civic Clubs (7) donate money and volunteers to present awards every 9 weeks.
- Businesses and individuals donate money and items given as awards.
- Sampson County Medical Society and Healthy Carolinians support programming.
- NC Academy of Family Physicians is using this model to develop similar programs throughout the state.

The ***Center for Health and Wellness*** opened in 2004, providing citizens a place for **health promotion and prevention** with structured exercise, aquatic programs, and a comprehensive rehabilitation center for physical therapy and cardiac patients. This concept proved so successful in Sampson County that the Center has entered into a management contract with neighboring Wayne County.

- The Wellness Center offers a variety of programs promoting exercise for all ages, with weekly programs from 5:30 AM to 8:00 PM.
- It emphasizes specialized medical-based fitness services to modify or improve lifestyles.
- It is sustained by membership dues and volunteers from medical community, Cooperative Extension Agency and various businesses and industries.
- Expansion of programming to adjacent county is sustained through Mount Olive College.
- The Center provides numerous outreach programs to at-risk groups within the community as part of its "non-profit" mission.

Having these two projects lead the fight against obesity has energized the entire community!

3. Describe the partnerships and collaborations involved in the creation, development, and implementation of this project. (300 word maximum)

Fitness Renaissance was conceived by local physician Dr. Tommy Newton, with assistance from Clinton City Schools administration. Initial enthusiasm was extraordinary and the program received local and statewide attention. This innovative, **one-of-a-kind in the US** program has been:

- Copyrighted by US Patent Office.
- Endorsed by the NC Academy of Family Physicians.
- Adopted by Carolinas District of Kiwanis International.
- Supported by Clinton Lions, Rotary, Civitan, ABWA and Women's Clubs.
- Awarded grants from Blue Cross / Blue Shield of NC Foundation.

This school-based program is successful because it accentuates the positive by demonstrating the exercise improvement levels among the participants and rewarding them with modest incentives and public recognition among peers.

The *Center for Health and Wellness* began with capital costs of \$4,700,000. Many citizens saw the need for a place where the entire community could **focus on getting and staying in shape**.

Collaborative funding sources included:

- Public and private trusts and foundations (\$600,000).
- Local individuals and organizations (\$2,000,000).
- Sampson Regional Medical Center (\$2,100,000).

This facility serves as the **focal point** for health and fitness collaborations with:

- Sampson County Parks and Recreation – Chair-based exercise
- Clinton High – Swim team pool use
- Sampson County Department of Aging – Warm Water Therapy
- Medical Society learning series – Learning series
- NC State Cooperative Extension Agency – Healthy cooking
- Business and Industry – BP screenings & CPR training

The *Center for Health and Wellness* reaches all ages and races in its focus to make Clinton a healthier place. Whether it's lifting the weight of day-to-day stress in the weight room, rehabilitating arthritic knees, or enrolling a child in the Sampson County-based swim team, this facility is for the entire community.

4. Describe the qualitative and quantitative outcomes of this project in the last 3 years and explain how this project has been a success. (300 word maximum)

Fitness Renaissance has made a tremendous impact on fitness levels of elementary school children.

- Number of children considered obese/overweight from 2005 to 2006 decreased 12%.
- Body Mass Index for all grade levels involved decreased an average of 6%.
- 9,000 children have participated since inception.
- 90% of participants have received an award.

Student comments: “*I did it!, I beat my best!*”; “*I am more flexible than I used to be!*”; “*I am more confident in myself!*”

It is not often that such a simple, yet effective, program such as *Fitness Renaissance* makes such a positive difference in the lives of youth. The **novelty, practicality and success** of this program has **unified the community** and created awareness that physically active, healthy children become that same type of adult.

The Center for Health and Wellness continues to touch the community in many ways.

Key numbers include:

- 94,000 visits in 2005 and 107,000 visits in 2006.
- 70% Caucasian, 21% African American, 6% Hispanic and others.
- 60% women – 40% men participating.
- 7% ages 16-22, 26% ages 23-39, 46% ages 40-64, 21% ages 65-94 participating.
- 50 group fitness classes offered weekly, which average 2,000 participants.
- 3,000 fitness assessments and equipment orientations performed by staff.
- 56 swimming program participants in a town that has never before had an indoor pool.

Community-wide public, private, corporate, religious, professional, and civic organizations are supporting and utilizing the facility. Some are just beginning to fight, some are busy sustaining the fight, and some are rehabilitating wounds caused by the fight; however, all are on the road to healthier lifestyles that keep obesity and its related diseases from increasing in Clinton.

Name the primary contact for the project. Provide name & title, organization, address, telephone, and e-mail address. *(This person may be contacted to verify information.)*

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PROJECT THREE

As a commitment to America's Promise, the National Civic League has issued the Youth Initiative Challenge. We ask that at least one project from each All-America City applicant document ways in which the lives of children and youth have been tangibly improved.

1. Project summary, name and give a brief description. *(150 word maximum)*

In December of 2001, Clinton City Schools (CCS) opened a **Community Technology Learning Center (CTLC)**. The center was opened with two purposes: 1) provide CCS's students in grades K-12 with a *free, after-school program* that assists students with homework and technology; and 2) provide the entire community with **access to technology**.

The CTLC After School Program

- *High School honor students work at the center as tutors.* Providing homework assistance, with a special emphasis on improvement in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics and technology skills. The tutors serve as positive role models for students they help. Students who attend the center are motivated by their tutors and encouraged to reach their full potential.

The CTLC Community Component

- *Free adult technology classes are offered* to community members and local business and civic groups, encouraging life-long learning and improving marketability in the workforce.
-

2. Describe the relationship between this project and the challenge it is addressing, the project's history, and how it is being sustained? *(300 word maximum)*

The Clinton City Schools system is located in a low-wealth community with approximately 67% of students currently receiving free/reduced meals. The first stage of development for the CTLC began with a needs assessment. A survey was conducted, producing the following results:

- Fewer than 30% of students reported having a computer in their homes.
- Approximately 30% of students lived in single-parent homes.
- 12% of students lived in homes where neither parent was employed.
- Teachers reported that approximately 25% of students came to school daily without homework or with homework that was incompletely and/or poorly done. This was due, in part, to lack of parental support and low parental educational level.

These low income families had little or no access to technology or academic support after school.

Our challenge was to provide **opportunities beyond the regular school day** for students to complete their homework and receive additional tutorial assistance to prepare them for the next instructional day and the next level of schooling. The school system also desired to provide students and citizens with access to technology.

The CTLC was originally funded by a federal grant. The competitive CTLC grant was able to fund the center through the 05-06 school year, with assistance from the local school board and the Clinton City School system. The program is being sustained by Clinton City Schools.

Due to a growing Hispanic population in schools and the community, CTLC makes an effort to employ **bilingual tutors** to assist with communication among students, parents, and community members.

3. Describe the partnerships and collaborations involved in the creation, development, and implementation of this project. (300 word maximum)

The Community Technology Learning Center (CTLC) was created with assistance from many community members. The CTLC has a **community-driven mission** and provides valuable services to students and community. An advisory board with a **shared vision of overcoming educational challenges** was formed during the center's early planning stages. The advisory board consisted of at least one individual from each of the following organizations:

- Sampson Community College
- North Carolina Cooperative Extension Agency
- NC Employment Security Commission
- Sampson-Clinton Public Library
- Head Start
- Clinton City Schools Board of Education
- Clinton-Sampson Chamber of Commerce
- Star Telephone Membership Corporation
- Butler Avenue School- site of the CTLC

The partnerships formed in the early stages of the development of the CTLC assisted in making a solid foundation for the center and they continue to be very supportive and resourceful contacts.

4. Describe the qualitative and quantitative outcomes of this project in the last 3 years and explain how this project has been a success. (300 word maximum)

The Community Technology Learning Center (CLTC) has been extremely successful since its opening in 2001. Because of its initial success, a **second site at Sampson Middle School opened** in the fall of 2003 to accommodate more students and community members. The Center's success is measured through attendance records, surveys, and test scores.

The center maintains strong attendance records. The 2001-2002 school year ended with 700 student visits. The CLTC has grown considerably since its first year. Attendance records show that approximately 5,000 student visits were accommodated during the 2005-2006 school year. Parents and teachers are surveyed annually to determine how the center affected student achievement. Some of the results of the 2005-2006 survey indicate the following:

- 100% of parents were satisfied with the homework assistance provided.
- 91% of parents noticed an improvement in their child's grades.
- 100% of parents agreed that the center supports the academic growth of Clinton City Schools.
- 100% of teachers encouraged students to attend the CLTC.
- 100% of teachers believe the center supports the academic growth of Clinton City Schools.

During the 2005-2006 school year, students made scale score gains of up to 27 points on the North Carolina End of Grade (EOG) Tests. These numbers are expected to increase for the 2006-2007 school year.

Parents, community members, businesses and civic groups who participate in the CLTC's technology courses demonstrate their satisfaction by continuing to participate in activities offered at the center.

Name the primary contact for the project. Provide name & title, organization, address, telephone, and e-mail address. (This person may be contacted to verify information.)

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End of Application

See www.ncl.org/aac/ or the application instructions for detailed application instructions and sample applications from previous All-America City Winners.



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